

An Inaugural Dissertation

on

Fever

Philip D. Williamson

admitted March 18. 1820

By Philip D. Williamson  
at the Bpt  
No 184 High Street  
before the faculty

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D<sup>r</sup>. Cullen remarks that "Fever, after beginning with some degree of cold shivering, show some increase of heat, & increased frequency of pulse, with the interruption and disorder of several functions, particularly some diminution of strength, in the animal functions". Although it is general ly admitted, that D<sup>r</sup>. Cullen has been as accurate an observer of the Phenomena of Fever, and has described them as accurately as any other - yet this definition of Fever, will not by any means hold good in every case, as perhaps no one of the circumstances which he has mentioned, as indicative of Solute ration, invariably occurs in every Fever.

The theories of Fever have been numerous & variously modified from the time of Hippocrates, to the present period; and at the present day there are various opinions respecting the nature of Fever, and consequently various, in the mode of treatment.

So much however has been written on the subject

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of Fevers, and that too by persons whose talents and opportunities, for acquiring information on the subject, have rendered competent to the task, that it would be a presumptuous presumption in one, whose experience has been but small, to flatter myself that any thing that I could say on the subject, would tend, in any degree, to explain the nature of Fever in general, or lead to a better mode of treatment: My object therefore will be merely to give a brief description of a Fever, of a peculiar nature, which prevails in a part of the counties of Loudon & Fauquier, Virginia, in which I resided a short time during the last summer.

The disease which I design describing has received the appellation of Endlasting Fever, from several eminent physicians, from the circumstance of the long duration of the feeble action of the Pulse, But the name by which I shall designate it, is, Chronic Intermittent Fever, which name I believe was first used by Dr. J. W. Smith, with whom I spent two or three months last summer. Dr. Smith has seen a greater number

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of cases of this disease, than any other physician, with whom I am acquainted, he has had not less than a hundred cases since the year 1813. —

Dr. Smith lives in a small village, about four miles distant from the Blue ridge, on the east side of it, and but few persons who were affected with this disease, were more remote from the mountain than six night miles, — —

This Fever was attended in different individuals with such a variety of symptoms, that I am at a loss to know in what manner I can best

describe it — In no two instances probably are they ~~exactly~~ <sup>13</sup> the same — The action of the pulse is the most uniform, being generally what is called <sup>90000</sup> synochular. There appears to be a peculiar action of the pulse in this disease, which will lead persons, who have been accustomed to examine the pulse of patients, labouring under this disease, to suspect its existence immediately —

Conjoined with this affliction of the pulse, the usual symptoms, are, pain in some part of the chest, sometimes pain but sometimes in the region of the stomach and abdomen,



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frequent headache, colds in the salivary, nostrils, & eyes, &  
only the former in two instances mentioned by Dr. Smith.  
The abdomen was occasionally swollen to an enormous  
size, and would again subside, without any violent cause.  
In one instance the patient was confined to his bed, for  
six months, with a severe pain in his head, which was  
at length relieved by opium, but the fever still continued.

Several patients complained of nothing more, than great  
fatigue, and in these cases, considerable convalescence took  
place, without pain in any particular part of the body.

In many cases, probably in about ~~most~~ of those  
which have occurred. There have been most of the symp-  
toms of Dyspepsia - cardialgia, a gnawing or burning sen-  
sation in the region of the stomach, flatulency, languor,  
& convulsions of various kinds, but commonly not severe.

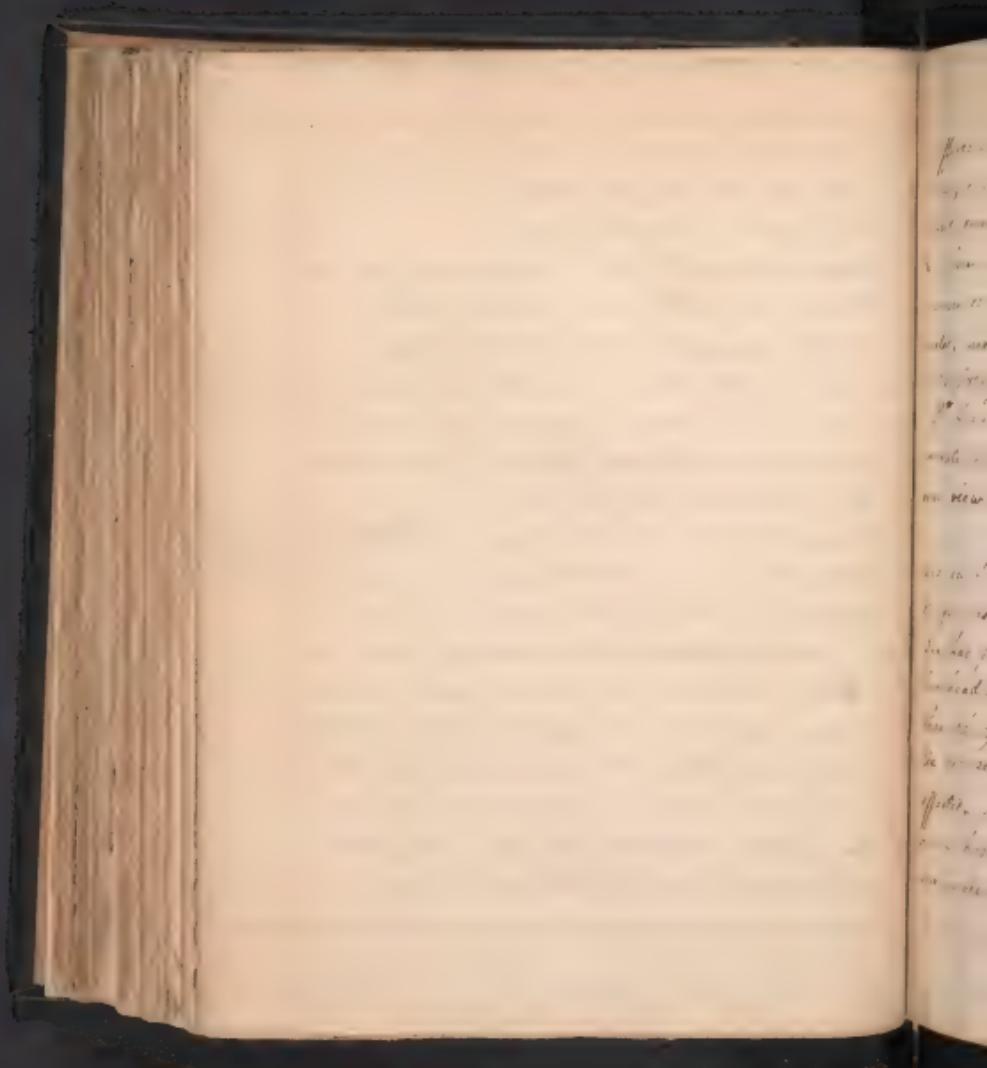
In some cases there were so many dyspeptic symptoms,  
that some physicians of the highest standing, were at  
first inclined to consider the whole as an epidemic dys-  
pepsia, and under that impression have used all the rem-  
edies recommended in that disease, without having in-

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any one instance, which I can recollect, where the disease  
has been so violent as to cause the disease, have been  
and to be sufficient to condemn it.

In several instances, the cattle have been attacked with this  
disease, and a few hours since, which local physicians have been  
consulted in these above-mentioned counties, that, speaking now, with  
a degree of confidence in the power of the disease, has not as yet  
manifested in cattle, except a suppy, although several persons  
have been attacked, so I speak of them. In one or two instances  
there has been some local affection.

Women appear to be much more liable to this attack,  
the disease more severe — probably the number of men and  
of cattle with it, is to that in the woman as two to three thousand  
— Some physicians from this circumstance were induced  
to believe that this fever debilitates a person, and was kept  
up by some derangement in the organs proper to the female sex,  
but a very early objection to this sentiment is, that it is  
not peculiar to females — Pregnancy has not been found  
to have any effect in allaying the action of the disease —  
Almost every article in The Phil. Med. has been written

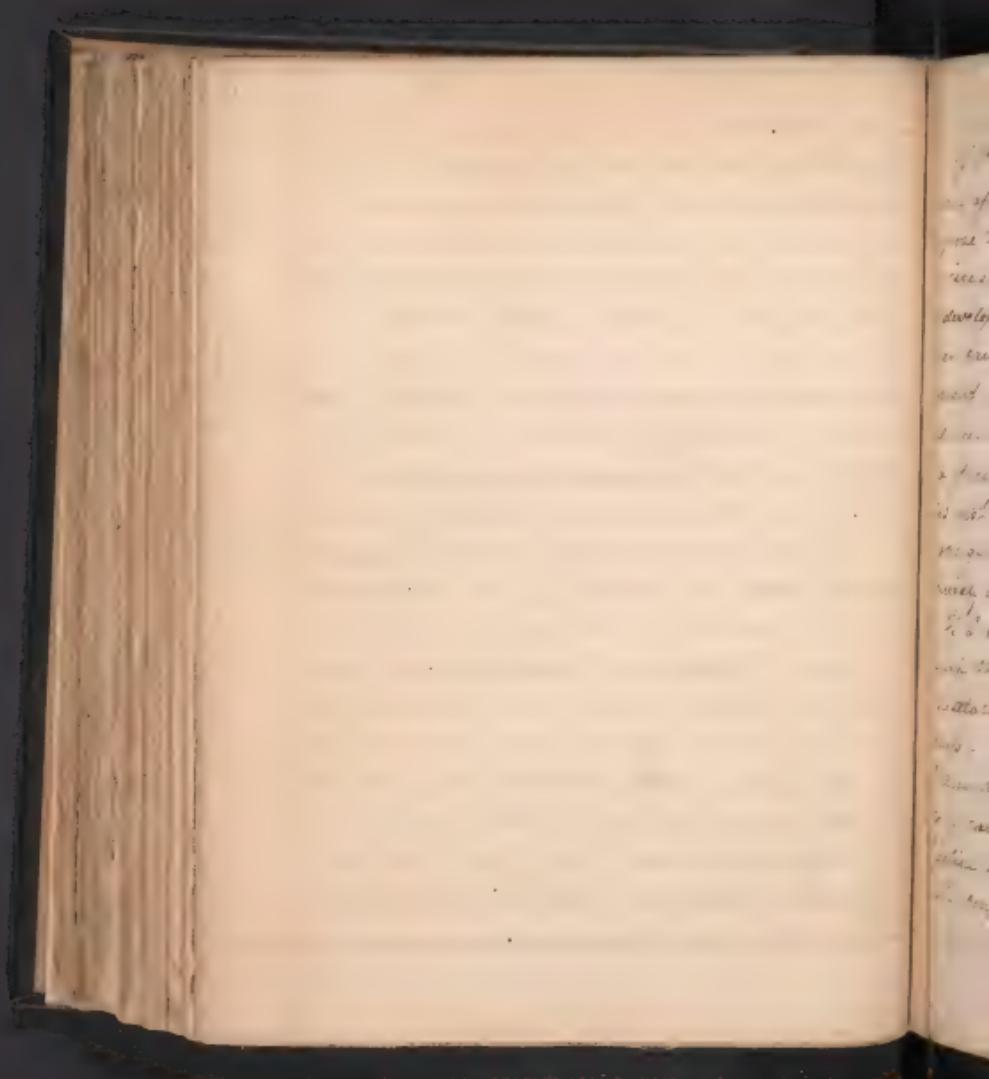


off the saddle - it is not a bad disease -  
it is in some instances, a very severe affection, but  
not always so - in others it is a mere trifling  
affection - it is hard to tell in the first place what  
is the disease, as there are so many different kinds  
of it, and then I have very care and trouble to know  
exactly - - Of the cases which occurred to  
me lately, several of them I do not, though  
well informed, but as they are sufficient to give you  
an idea of the more usual symptoms -

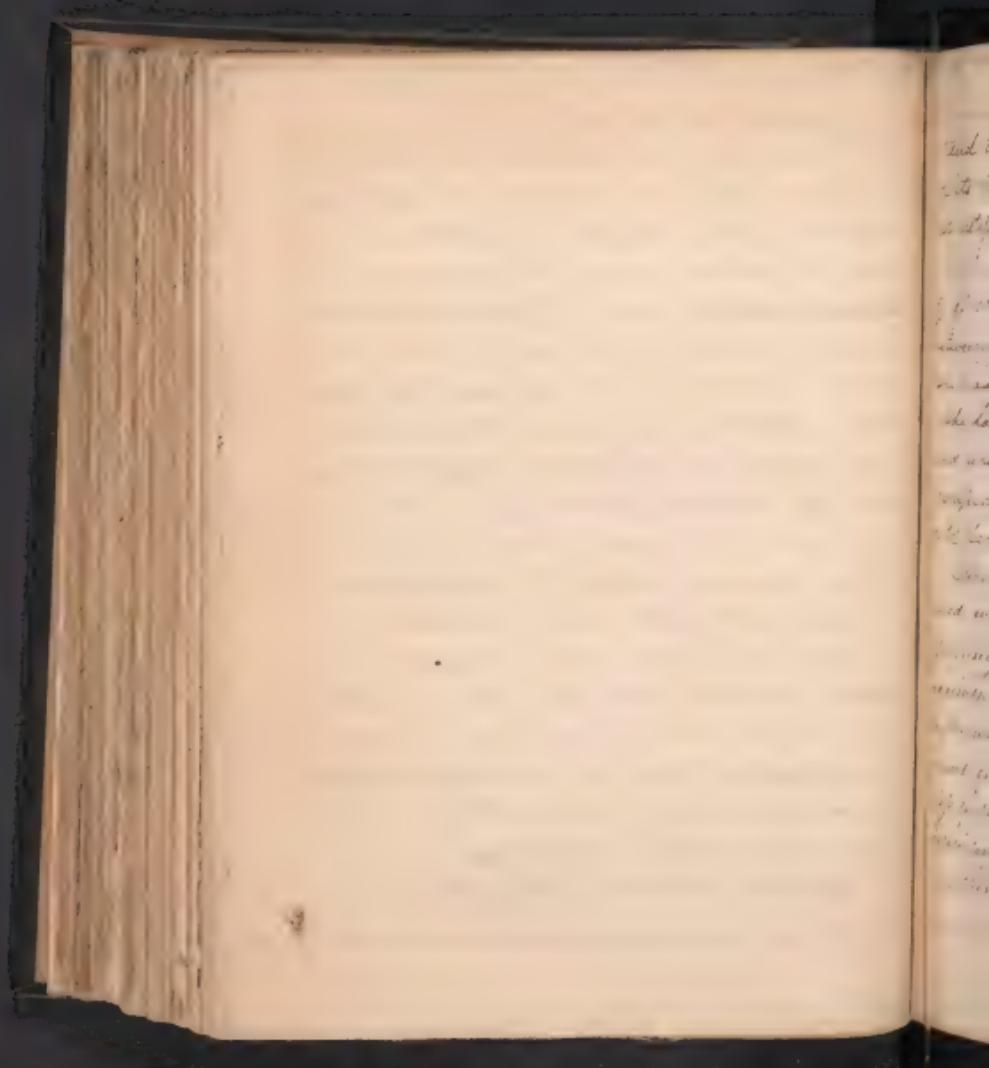
The first case which I will describe  
was in June 1812 - - a boy of 12 years of age  
from a distant and a very fluctuating home.  
He had pain in his heart and side, and sometimes in  
his head - & with these I find he has all the signs  
of a very bad, either typhous, or violent fever -  
he was unctended for some time, when I am first  
afflected, she was first upon a course of mercury, and laid  
down his bed - & a considerable length of time -  
he was not unctended - several physicians were called -

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resolution and we used every medicine which we  
thought promised to be at all beneficial, and the doctor  
for the use of which we, for over the last year  
placed on the right side of which she took a large man  
of infusion - I often in other mortal cases  
she was able to rise and sit, and her pulse and face  
were very fit preserving, so small using the pou-  
ssettes, particularly as she was very ill, and  
right from them, other medicines were omitted.  
She has been ill occasionally since about six weeks in  
the storm, which is generally very right, without  
anything which she took specially and certainly cred-  
ited her as not very often companion enough to  
her up to ability and occasionally to some pain  
she in the neck breast, a side. She has not been  
entirely free from chronic action of the风 for more  
than six years - Some of the physicians who have  
attended her, at least suppose the bone to be left  
in a half-raw state of the lungs. But she  
only had any cough now with the usual symptoms



of this present - They have attributed it to  
a affection of the nerves. But it is reasonable to sup-  
pose that if there were such an affection in this  
case, its influence would have been more clearly  
perceptible, at this time. It was expected to result  
in a cure by other physicians etc. to a change  
of the position of the uterus and its motion  
etc. But this affection acts in a hazy  
& insidious manner, as either to the former; a thing  
of the slightest violence it may lead to  
or - or - I "doubt" however, is, that it is  
merely an inflammatory affection in the aural system -  
If I could be bound to believe, that there has been any  
such thing as an "Inflammation" of the ear, since no  
mention is made in any of the books which I have  
seen - but less what I have seen of the disease  
has reference to them, had the - course & disease  
been merely an inflammatory disease, & although such a  
thing is not violent, in many cases -  
the existing accounts respecting the disease



and to convince the difficulty of retaining anything  
with the nature, with certainty. "Canst thou, as  
I lifto?"

In the first case which I had an opportunity  
of observing, it is in 1785, a different woman  
now 60 of full years of age, when I saw her last,  
she is very thin to her bony, her two or three dentures;  
she has a little cough, slight pain in her chest,  
and was not - beginning trouble with - earache, she  
expresses concern principally I deliberate. She has  
bl. hair, her, a white, thin hair, an arched  
eyebrow, a very broad black. She has been  
dead now two or three days, some nice company soon  
to say she has recently observed the improvement  
in her, and has taken the usual medicine  
and nothing better. "She had no relation  
but in the person of her son son for 100s, the  
if of 15 or 163 has not the spirit of returning the jewels  
she brought you, you will not - the son of her  
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as nearly as active as before.

It is a fact that the disease, you say, has not  
subduced the force, but only increased the  
sobetity, which was now the most urgent  
symptom - Dr Smith changed his mode of  
treatment. we made use of Tonics, which for  
one or two appeared to be serviceable, but in  
the course of four or five days, he was obliged to  
discontinue their use, in consequence of their con-  
tinually increasing the disease, and heightening all  
the symptoms - particularly the pain in the breast  
below the head. Her pulse was also rendered much  
more feeble and her strength not recruited.

Dr Smith omits his medicines and she remains  
very "in slaine quo"; probably better than when  
taking them or at any rate not worse - She is able  
to sit up and walk a little about the house -  
she continues to lose a little blood occasionally -

Dr Williams has been ill for more  
than three years, in the first attack of the Fever.

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she was ill very frequently, and continually.  
She has been under the care of different Physicians,  
and taken medicines of various kinds, to a large amount,  
but has been in a state of profuse salivation two or three  
days. Her fever however remains unaltered - From her own  
account, she is worse every other day, so that on one  
day, she is able to be employed in the business of the  
Family, and on the next is obliged to keep her bed.  
This is the only case which I have seen, in which  
there appears to be any violent intermission, -  
She says, that for a considerable time after the com-  
mencement of the disease, she had colds but which  
symptom has now left her - She has pain in her head  
breast, and shoulder, particularly after taking  
meuse, or occurs to aggravate these symptoms -  
Her stomach is in so toro and a state, that she  
can eat nothing, but it has the effect of exciting  
disagreeable sensations, and increasing the violence  
of the Fever. On the worst days she has a burning  
sensation at the submucous cordis, attended with a

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involution, which she says is wholly undesirable - at the top of the sternum, which extends in some degree to the left shoulder, and as it were through the joint - This sensation is such, that she sometimes feels, as if she must inevitably suffocate - This woman is about 35 years of age and has borne one or two children since her first attack -

My S. V. was attacked about eighteen months ago, and has been under medical treatment ever since - In her case Dr. Smith has used almost every article of the Materia Medica, which he and other physicians who were called in consultation, thought at all calculated to be useful - independent of other means which were used, she has been bled twenty or thirty times; The Tincture of Digitalis, was used to a large amount, which produced a great degree of sickness, nausea, and vomiting; But all the means were proved unavailing, I saw her first in August last, she complained

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flaunces, heaviness, listlessness and disposition  
to move &c. her head was much affected with  
pain she had heavy dull pain in her eyes, and  
in addition to these, there was morbid vigilance  
not desirous a degree. that she seldom slept  
more than two or three hours in the twenty four.  
Although she had been under the treatment  
which I have mentioned above: her pulse was  
more quick, and more full, than in most cases  
of this Fever which I had seen, notwithstanding  
which, she was walking about, and looked toler-  
ably well - I directed about 20 vials of blood, which  
had the effect of reducing her pulse, for the former  
but in about half an hour I was astonished to find  
it nearly as active as before - as she was walking  
was the most desirous symptom with which she  
was affected, I was anxious to provide, a vermifuge  
something which would have a tendency to relieve  
apprehensions, which held up the cure  
which would not be diminished by eliminating

books

usual, I at first thought of using Opium & other  
narcotics, but the opium which she had already  
taken, had very frequently operated as an emetic,  
without producing any beneficial effects.

which however not is an infirmity, and as  
at this infirmity, opium was contraindicated, by the  
state of the system, I proposed to Dr. Smith, to use  
a small amount in her case - he readily concurred, and  
I accordingly sent him a box of pills, each containing about  
no grains of opium, with directions to take one, whenever  
she lay in the course of a few days I saw her, & was  
pleased to find that she had even common infirmities,  
more & considerable longer than heretofore and the  
affection of her head and eyes was greatly relieved.

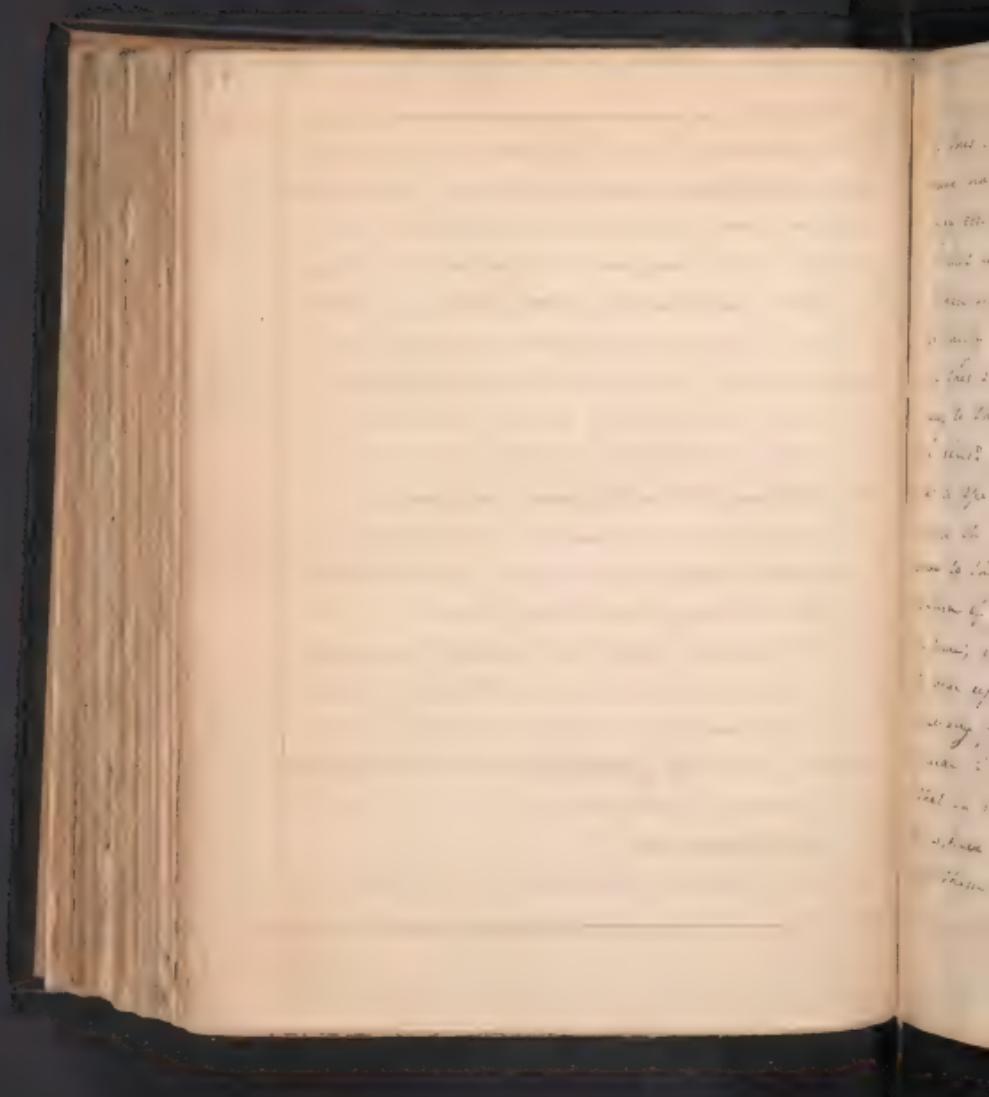
As I had never seen the sedative exhibited, I was anxious  
to ascertain its effect upon the pulse, and when  
she lay in bed in the room at 12 o'clock when the 10. am  
alarm clock in a shock to me, it was the first of  
many, as you are about to striking 12. in minutes,  
she commenced to take the pills and immediately quieted & slept

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The highmindedness which I just now spoke, she told me  
that her health was much better than it had been for  
nearly two years - and her mind is still perfectly clear & some  
of the sensations remain, but it is so much and a degree  
a lesser which I received from Dr. Smith. last Fall,  
he informs me that she was still in the same state as  
when I saw her, and that he derives as much benefit  
as I do of the sulphate of Lime in small doses as from  
a cathartick - Dr. Smith has used the Cobalt in several  
other cases and with nearly equal benefit -

I might go on to numerous other cases, but these will  
be sufficient to show, that this species, unisever may be  
small, is a very corroborative diuretic & in some  
cases it is marked & most of the cases of my Lord's  
"Horse's Pneumonia", on Horse, by those of Diognethes,  
are now quite all clear, which were in imminent  
and here it is worthy to notice that since the first appear-  
ance, no cases of this violent remittent or tertian  
have occurred -

I have never seen any other than the latter disease



of this disease has exceed the million since one  
and half an hundred of them with the usual  
and ordinary remedies, with respect to removing  
that it is not an easy task, and of course to say  
that those who have been practising for ten twenty  
or thirty years have been so unskillfully, & ignor-  
antly of this subject, I presume that it may be, unwilling &  
not to think that a nostrum will not come in  
a short time. I have sometimes been disposed to consider it  
as a species of Chronic Inflammation of the Stomach  
but it is certainly, in many instances very diffi-  
cult to this disease. But by what means such a feeble  
action of the pulse is kept up for so great a length  
of time; or how a fair instance, the system is unable  
to bear up under such an action of the pulse, are  
very few to prove out only injurious and  
that I am utterly unable to say. It is possible  
that as this as in other diseases, when the wrong are  
not, when become habitual, the irritability of overcom-  
ing them, is greatly enhanced.



In the marine or Tecto very little is known, the  
inorganic wave is subject to a much more rapid  
expansion over limited capacities, and more especially  
when we are able to say what variability it is in the  
medium it has been which causes it to become fluid;  
that is that the wave which causes it to become fluid  
is of marine origin. and in case of the marine, which can  
be of a limited in capacity, &c. and in what consists  
in power in animals of preserving an insatiable force  
pressure when exposed to one, & the very high, & very low  
as we may hope that the wave will be distant  
as we shall be able to understand and explain its  
intrinsic cause, & force. Many have been made  
of these, and one seems very satisfactorily explained a  
wave and each themself acting according to the theory  
which it has assumed or concluded. There have been  
such physician accusations in the waves of sea as  
these debates, that we can scarcely avoid thinking  
that little is sought down with difficulty to  
the marine. & marine men have wondered from

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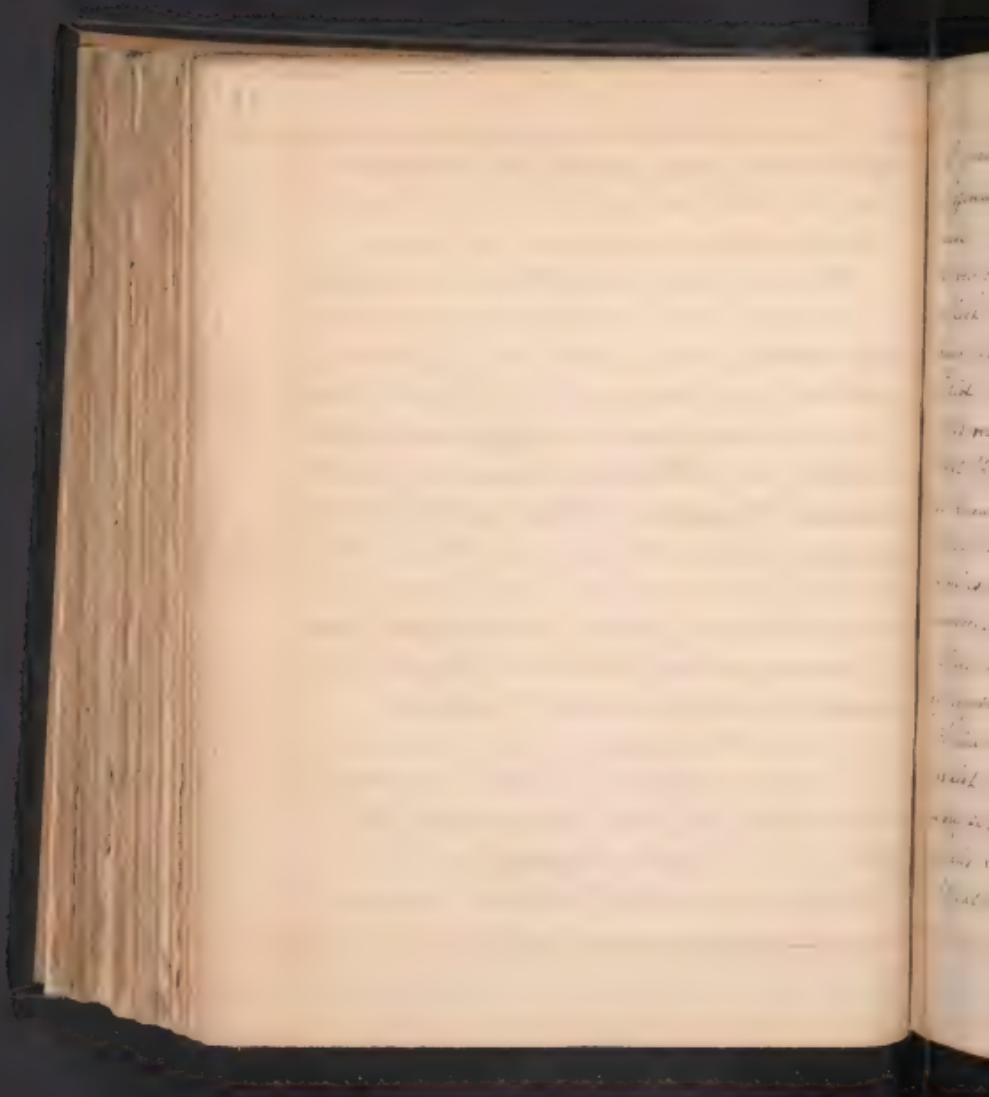
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conjecture to conjecture, or more than we dare say  
can, and we do not yet perceive any prospect,  
these conjectures being nearer to an answer.

The more general remote causes of disease  
are certain invisible exhalations, sometimes  
more evidently rising from burning grounds,  
sometimes more obscurely diffused in the atmos-  
phere, and sometimes obviously proceeding from  
the bodies of our fellow-men. We are not able to  
ascertain the nature of these exhalations, and this  
only by conjecture. That we have them in the  
channel, by which they enter the body. The  
changes which then operate on the solids, fluids  
& nervous system, before their action becomes  
obvious are totally unknown to us. —

As of other Doctors. so of the disease  
which I am treating. I know the result. That  
is to be sought for in the atmosphere. The  
state of the atmosphere however varies all the  
time. — you are correct. — Truth did not come to me



I am anxious to communicate, from observing the  
present effects of the same industry, on a wide scale,  
in a different direction, on the side, as depicted  
in the same modern course, with obvious dissensions  
but in this case between with apparently the same  
but on a more peaceful highly sentimentalistic side,  
but which we overlooked.

to be an even remote which was occurring. Not  
which is causing less fear, or which by so tightly defining  
one's surroundings is an almost every instance to fail, or  
one's returning by the lowest & otherwise.

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to treat of this disease. I am daily called to day  
and judge its effects & silent duration is a very  
convenient time - I have before mentioned that it is found  
in different individuals more violent. I would therefore  
ask what it is in the particular predisposition of  
men or the symptoms of Pulmonary Consumption  
which cause a variety of its degrees and in one  
case where I have sometimes the disease was situated  
in the symptoms very similar to those of any other disease  
viz. Weak instead of strong corpulent, robust man  
who are said to be most liable to it. In this  
man it selected a slender delicate female -

The permanency of the principle, has induced  
me to consider it as a superabundance of, say  
you in the air, & this I consider would appear to  
give some support from the circumstances, that  
some of the symptoms, were the reverse of those which  
are produced by a deficiency of oxygen, as in ascen-  
ding high mountains; nevertheless there have not  
been wanting others who imput it to a deficiency



is not, at least in a certain place, & since the weather  
ought to be considered, but I have not in view any  
of these. I can not settle them.

My objection however has been made against the  
annual, not that this fever is at all dependent on  
the atmosphere, because it is not the case, say  
ing we make the physician, in who resides in the same  
room should be attacked with it. But the same  
fever ought with equal propriety be made to  
any epidemic - in answer to the objection however as  
applies to this fever, I would say that I believe there  
is a just in a greater or less degree, in a little ex-  
tation or a slight deviation from the natural state,  
may be perceived in it quite to almost all.

I am inclined to think that temperament is  
the principal share in determining the point, on which  
a attack by this disease, and to this I am led from  
having observed that in almost every instance, it has  
been particularly violent in its action on persons of  
the sanguineous temperament -

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having this retain the more usual symptoms of the disease. It might be expected that I would recommend some mode of treatment. But my ignorance in this would prevent my attempting any thing to the kind, particularly as I have before stated, that almost all the articles of the *Matris Medicina*, popular of any great degree of activity, have been unavailing employed in the different cases.

If such a disease should occur in my practice, I would treat it on general principles. If there were no signs of suppuration, I would treat it as *viscidaria*. If there were symptoms of *Angina* *hæmorrhagica*, by its appropriate remedies. If there were no symptoms of *Pulmonary* *inflammation* I would employ the means adapted to the cure of a *viscidaria* in that disease. &c. and as in a like disease I would recommend a change of climate, and in this case I think it probable that a missouri country might prove most beneficial, from the circumstances I before stated.

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that no case of Intermittent or Relapsing Remittent Fever, has occurred, since this disease first made its appearance, although they were very common before. When the febrile action of the Bortropeps, has become habitual, might not the Purple acid, be used with advantage, in connection with other means, to subvert it?

Imperfect as the foregoing description of this disease has necessarily been, for many reasons. I conclude confidently trusting that it may sollicit a lenient concession or examination, and the subject excite that attention which it seems to merit, from those whose prærogative it is to do me the honor of reading this paper, and whose talents and acquirements render so competent to elucidate the nature of, and to devise the proper remedies for diseases in general; and that this disease may not be doomed, to seek a station, in the already too crowded list of the "Affectiona Medicorum."

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volumen de la natura de las cosas  
que se han de considerar en la  
naturaleza de la tierra y en la  
naturaleza de los seres que  
viven en la tierra. En la natura  
de la tierra se considera la  
naturaleza de la tierra y de los  
animales que viven en la tierra.

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naturaleza de los seres que viven en la tierra  
se considera la naturaleza de los seres que  
viven en la tierra y la naturaleza de los seres  
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Plantation

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of Steyning

settled March 22, 1821